In the claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A photomask protected against electrostatic damage comprising:

a substrate having a front face and a back face, said substrate being transparent at least to light having a selected wavelength used for printing;

a pattern permanently applied over said front face of said substrate, said pattern being opaque to said light having said selected wavelength used for printing; and

a conductive film which is transparent to said light having said selected wavelength used for printing, said conductive film deposited so as to ~~at least~~ form a cover ~~those portions of~~ over said front face of said substrate ~~not covered by~~ and to be in contact with said opaque pattern.

2. (Currently Amended) The photomask of Claim 1 wherein said conductive film further forms a cover over ~~covers~~ said opaque pattern.

3. (Original) The photomask of Claim 2 wherein said conductive film further covers said back face of said substrate, thereby forming a Faraday cage around said photomask.

4. (Original) The photomask of Claim 1 wherein said conductive film covers substantially all of said front face of said substrate and said opaque pattern is permanently secured to said conductive film covering said front face of said substrate.

5. (Original) The photomask of Claim 4 wherein said conductive film further covers said back face of said substrate thereby forming a Faraday cage around said photomask.

6. (Original) The photomask of Claim 1 wherein said substrate is fused silica.

7. (Original) The photomask of Claim 2 wherein said substrate is fused silica.

8. (Original) The photomask of Claim 4 wherein said substrate is fused silica.

9. (Original) The photomask of Claim 1 wherein said opaque pattern is made of a material selected from the group consisting of Chromium and Molybdenum silicide.

10. (Original) The photomask of Claim 2 wherein said opaque pattern is made of a material selected from the group consisting of Chromium and Molybdenum silicide.

11. (Original) The photomask of Claim 4 wherein said opaque pattern is made of a material selected from the group consisting of Chromium and Molybdenum silicide.

12. (Original) The photomask of Claim 6 wherein said opaque pattern is made of a material selected from the group consisting of Chromium and Molybdenum silicide.

13. (Original) The photomask of Claim 1 wherein said conductive film is made from a material selected from the group consisting of ITO (Indium Tin Oxide), Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymers.

14. (Original) The photomask of Claim 2 wherein said conductive film is made from a material selected from the group consisting of ITO (Indium Tin Oxide), Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymers.

15. (Original) The photomask of Claim 4 wherein said conductive film is made from a material selected from the group consisting of ITO (Indium Tin Oxide), Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymers.

16. (Original) The photomask of Claim 6 wherein said conductive film is made from a material selected from the group consisting of ITO (Indium Tin Oxide), Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymers.

17. (Original) The photomask of Claim 9 wherein said conductive film is made from a material selected from the group consisting of ITO (Indium Tin Oxide), Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymers.

18. (Original) The photomask of Claim 10 wherein said conductive film is made from a material selected from the group consisting of ITO (Indium Tin Oxide), Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymers.

19. (Original) The photomask of Claim 11 wherein said conductive film is made from a material selected from the group consisting of ITO (Indium Tin Oxide), Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymers.

20. (Original) The photomask of Claim 12 wherein said conductive film is made from a material selected from the group consisting of ITO (Indium Tin Oxide), Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymers.

21. (Original) The photomask of Claim 1 wherein said light used for printing has a wavelength of 436 nm (nanometer) and said conductive film is ITO deposited to a thickness of about 100 Angstroms.

22. (Original) The photomask of Claim 2 wherein said light used for printing has a wavelength of 436 nm (nanometer) and said conductive film is ITO deposited to a thickness of about 100 Angstroms.

23. (Original) The photomask of Claim 4 wherein said light used for printing has a wavelength of 436 nm (nanometer) and said conductive film is ITO deposited to a thickness of about 100 Angstroms.

24. (Original) The photomask of Claim 6 wherein said light used for printing has a wavelength of 436 nm (nanometer) and said conductive film is ITO deposited to a thickness of about 100 Angstroms.

25. (Original) The photomask of Claim 12 wherein said light used for printing has a wavelength of 436 nm (nanometer) and said conductive film is ITO deposited to a thickness of about 100 Angstroms.

26. (Original) The photomask of Claim 1 wherein said light used for printing has a wavelength of about 248 nm (nanometer) and said conductive film is Palladium deposited to a thickness of about 30 Angstroms.

27. (Original) The photomask of Claim 2 wherein said light used for printing has a wavelength of about 248 nm (nanometer) and said conductive film is Palladium deposited to a thickness of about 30 Angstroms.

28. (Original) The photomask of Claim 4 wherein said light used for printing has a wavelength of about 248 nm (nanometer) and said conductive film is Palladium deposited to a thickness of about 30 Angstroms.

29. (Original) The photomask of Claim 6 wherein said light used for printing has a wavelength of about 248 nm (nanometer) and said conductive film is Palladium deposited to a thickness of about 30 Angstroms.

30. (Original) The photomask of Claim 12 wherein said light used for printing has a wavelength of about 248 nm (nanometer) and said conductive film is Palladium deposited to a thickness of about 30 Angstroms.

31. (Original) The photomask of Claim 1 wherein said light used for printed has a wavelength of about 193 nm (nanometer) and said conductive film is a material selected from the group consisting of Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymers deposited to a thickness of between about 30 Angstroms and 100 Angstroms.

32. (Original) The photomask of Claim 2 wherein said light used for printed has a wavelength of about 193 nm (nanometer) and said conductive film is a material selected from the group consisting of Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymers deposited to a thickness of between about 30 Angstroms and 100 Angstroms.

33. (Original) The photomask of Claim 4 wherein said light used for printed has a wavelength of about 193 nm (nanometer) and said conductive film is a material selected from the group consisting of Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymer deposited to a thickness of between about 30 Angstroms and 100 Angstroms.

34. (Original) The photomask of Claim 6 wherein said light used for printed has a wavelength of about 193 nm (nanometer) and said conductive film is a material selected from the group consisting of Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymers deposited to a thickness of between about 30 Angstroms and 100 Angstroms.

35. (Original) The photomask of Claim 12 wherein said light used for printed has a wavelength of about 193 nm (nanometer) and said conductive film is a material selected from the

group consisting of Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymers deposited to a thickness of between about 30 Angstroms and 100 Angstroms.

36. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a photomask protected against electrical damage, comprising:

providing a substrate having a front face and a back face, said substrate being transparent to a selected light wavelength used for printing;

permanently applying a pattern over said front face which is opaque to said light having a selected wavelength used for printing;

depositing a conductive film so as to form a cover over ~~at least those portions of~~ said front face of said substrate ~~not covered by said opaque pattern~~, said conductive film being in electrical contact with said applied pattern and transparent to said light having a selected wavelength used for printing.

37. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 36 wherein said depositing step comprises depositing said conductive film to form a cover over said front face of said substrate including said pattern.

38. (Original) The method of Claim 36 wherein said depositing step occurs prior to said step of applying said pattern and at least covers substantially all of said front face of said substrate.

39. (Original) The method of Claim 36 wherein said substrate is fused silica.

40. (Original) The method of Claim 37 wherein said substrate is fused silica.

41. (Original) The method of Claim 38 wherein said substrate is fused silica.

42. (Original) The method of Claim 36 wherein said opaque pattern is made from a material selected from the group consisting of Chromium and Molybdenum Silicide.

43. (Original) The method of Claim 37 wherein said opaque pattern is made from a material selected from the group consisting of Chromium and Molybdenum Silicide.

44. (Original) The method of Claim 38 wherein said opaque pattern is made from a material selected from the group consisting of Chromium and Molybdenum Silicide.

45. (Original) The method of Claim 39 wherein said opaque pattern is made from a material selected from the group consisting of Chromium and Molybdenum Silicide.

46. (Original) The method of Claim 40 wherein said opaque pattern is made from a material selected from the group consisting of Chromium and Molybdenum Silicide.

47. (Original) The method of Claim 41 wherein said opaque pattern is made from a material selected from the group consisting of Chromium and Molybdenum Silicide.

48. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~38~~ 36 wherein said conductive film is made from a material selected from the group consisting of ITO (Indium Tin Oxide), Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymers.

49. (Original) The method of Claim 37 wherein said conductive film is made from a material selected from the group consisting of ITO (Indium Tin Oxide), Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymers.

50. (Original) The method of Claim 38 wherein said conductive film is made from a material selected from the group consisting of ITO (Indium Tin Oxide), Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymers.

51. (Original) The method of Claim 39 wherein said conductive film is made from a material selected from the group consisting of ITO (Indium Tin Oxide), Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymers.

52. (Original) The method of Claim 48 wherein said conductive film is ITO deposited to a thickness of about 100 Angstroms.

53. (Original) The method of Claim 49 wherein said conductive film is ITO deposited to a thickness of about 100 Angstroms.

54. (Original) The method of Claim 50 wherein said conductive film is ITO deposited to a thickness of about 100 Angstroms.

55. (Original) The method of Claim 48 wherein said conductive film is made from a material selected from the group consisting of Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymer and is deposited to a thickness between about 30 Angstroms and 100 Angstroms.

56. (Original) The method of Claim 49 wherein said conductive film is made from a material selected from the group consisting of Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymer and is deposited to a thickness between about 30 Angstroms and 100 Angstroms.

57. (Original) The method of Claim 50 wherein said conductive film is made from a material selected from the group consisting of Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymer and is deposited to a thickness between about 30 Angstroms and 100 Angstroms.

58. (Original) The method of Claim 51 wherein said conductive film is made from a material selected from the group consisting of Palladium, Platinum, Gold and conductive polymer and is deposited to a thickness between about 30 Angstroms and 100 Angstroms.